

Visiting a Loved One in a Nursing Home? Tips for a Safe Visit

COVID-19 is still circulating in Virginia, and outbreaks continue to occur in long-term care and other congregate settings. If you are visiting a loved one who resides in a nursing home, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved one.

DO NOT ENTER the facility if you:

- Have a **positive viral test*** for COVID-19 or
- [Symptoms of COVID-19](#), even if mild symptoms, or
- Currently **meet the criteria for quarantine*** [close contact with someone who has COVID-19, unless you have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people, or if you had confirmed COVID-19 (tested positive using a viral test) within the last 90 days]

*The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) strongly encourage all visitors to become **vaccinated** for COVID-19 and stay-up-to date on their vaccine including booster dose. The following precautions can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infections such as flu and norovirus that may also be circulating.*

During your visit:

- Perform **hand hygiene** frequently, including before and after your visit.
- Keep your **mask**** on during your visit, covering your mouth and nose.
- Maintain **physical distance*** (at least 6 feet between people).
- Follow facility guidance regarding where to have the visit:
 - Conduct visits outdoors, if possible, especially if you or your loved one are not up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccination.
 - During indoor visitation:
 - Limit your movement within the facility. Go directly to your loved one's room or designated visitation area.
 - In-room visits should ideally be conducted when a roommate is not present. If your loved one's roommate is unvaccinated, immunocompromised (regardless of vaccination status), or if physical distance cannot be maintained and the roommate is present, it is best to conduct the visit somewhere other than your loved one's room, if possible.
- If visiting a unit that is caring for individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or your loved one has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 (including being in quarantine due to recent exposure):
 - Be aware you are assuming **risk of contracting COVID-19**.
 - Perform **hand hygiene** before and after the visit.
 - Wear appropriate **personal protective equipment** (surgical mask, gown, gloves). Follow staff guidance for how to put on and take off PPE.
 - **Limit surfaces touched** while inside the room.
 - **Limit your movement** within the facility.
 - Maintain **physical distance** while inside the room.
 - After the visit, **monitor yourself** for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days.
 - Provide your contact information to the facility, if asked, so that the health department can help manage your potential exposure to COVID-19. Follow public health guidance regarding quarantine, as appropriate.

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) that individuals with COVID-19 stay away from nursing homes and other high-risk settings until at least 10 days after symptom onset (or date of positive test, if asymptomatic). Those under quarantine should avoid nursing homes for at least 10 days after exposure.

Wearing a well-fitting mask (preferably one with better protection, such a surgical mask or KN95) and keeping physical distance is the **safest practice, even if you are vaccinated and COVID-19 transmission is low in the community.

Note: [CMS Nursing Home Visitation Guidance for COVID-19](#) was revised on 11/12/2021; visitation is now allowed for all residents at all times.

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